

Embedded Promises

Long Beach Alliance Church • December 10th, 2006 • Pastor Chris Lankford

SEEK THE LORD WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND; CALL UPON HIM WHILE HE IS NEAR. LET THE WICKED FORSAKE HIS WAY AND THE UNRIGHTEOUS MAN HIS THOUGHTS; AND LET HIM RETURN TO THE LORD, AND HE WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON HIM, AND TO OUR GOD, FOR HE WILL ABUNDANTLY PARDON.

~GENESIS 17:6-7 (NASB)

1) A Singular Promise Of A Promising Future

- A) The writers of the Older Testament wrote down the prophecies which God gave to them about the future Messiah (1st Peter 1:10-12).

- B) The prophets foretold of a time in the future when the Messiah would come as a mighty king to free God's chosen people from oppression (Isaiah 9:2-5).

- C) The prophets foretold of a time in the future when that same mighty king would come as a child (9:6).

- D) The prophets foretold that this child king would be God Himself, and He would rule "from then on and forevermore" (9:6-7).

- E) The prophets foretold of the Messiah coming with miraculous power to heal the blind, deaf, mute, and lame (35:5-6). The Messiah would come and bring good news to those who were oppressed and broken (61:1-2).

- F) The prophets foretold of a Messiah who would bring justice to the earth with wisdom and glorious power which would bring peace to the whole earth (11:1-9).

2) An Unexpected (But Foretold) Twist

- A) The prophets also foretold of the Messiah being vulnerable, unattractive, and a man who would be despised (53:2-3).

- B) The prophets foretold of the Messiah bearing the sins of the world and experiencing horrible suffering (53:4-7).

- C) The prophets foretold of the Messiah being buried in dignity, which meant the Messiah would die (53:9).

- D) The prophets foretold that the Messiah would bear the sins of the world to satisfy the wrath of God for the benefit (intercession) of sinners (53:10-12).

3) A Promise Seen From Three Directions

- A) Like a diamond which can be appreciated differently from different angles and in different light, so are the prophecies of the Older Testament about the Messiah.

- B) The prophecies about the Messiah in the Older Testament, when viewed from different points in history, cast a different light and different angles on what the prophets foretold.

- C) What the Older Testaments prophets revealed is that there is one grand promise of God coming as a child, suffering and dying as payment for sin, and coming (again) to establish a kingdom for all mankind.

- D) However, that promise works itself out in different facets, in different time periods, and in ways that no one could have possibly known.

- E) The promise would not come all at once, as the prophets had thought and as the Jews believed (cf. John 12:31-36; Luke 7:18-23). There would be three great movements which would result in one great promise being fulfilled.

- F) **The first promise** would be a child born to a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). **The second promise** would be a suffering servant who would give his life up (53:10-12). **The third promise** would be the second coming of Messiah to establish His earthly reign of authority, peace, and justice (9:7, cf. Ezekiel 37:24-28). Keep these in mind as you read prophecies about Jesus!

Advent Scripture Reading

As the prophets searched for the coming of the Messiah, will you also take time to look forward to the Messiah's coming this week? Seek His great Kingdom and recognize what it will look like through the eyes of the prophets.

- **Read 1st Peter 1:10-12**
- **Read Isaiah 9:2-7; 35:1-10**

The prophecies about the Messiah are miraculously fulfilled in Jesus Christ! Take a look at the enclosed chart on prophecy and read the prophecies and fulfillments of the following prophecies from the chart.

- **Read Prophecies 1-12**

There were many prophecies of Christ's birth, but there were also many about his suffering and death for His people's sins (intercession). Take some time to meditate on such a great God as the one who would suffer for people like us.

- **Read Isaiah 53:1-12**

The prophecies about the Messiah are also about a future King and His Kingdom which have not yet happened. Like the prophets of old, we wait, we look, we expect an arrival. Of what? Read of God's great future for us!

- **Read Isaiah 60:1-22**

Advent Reading #2 ~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

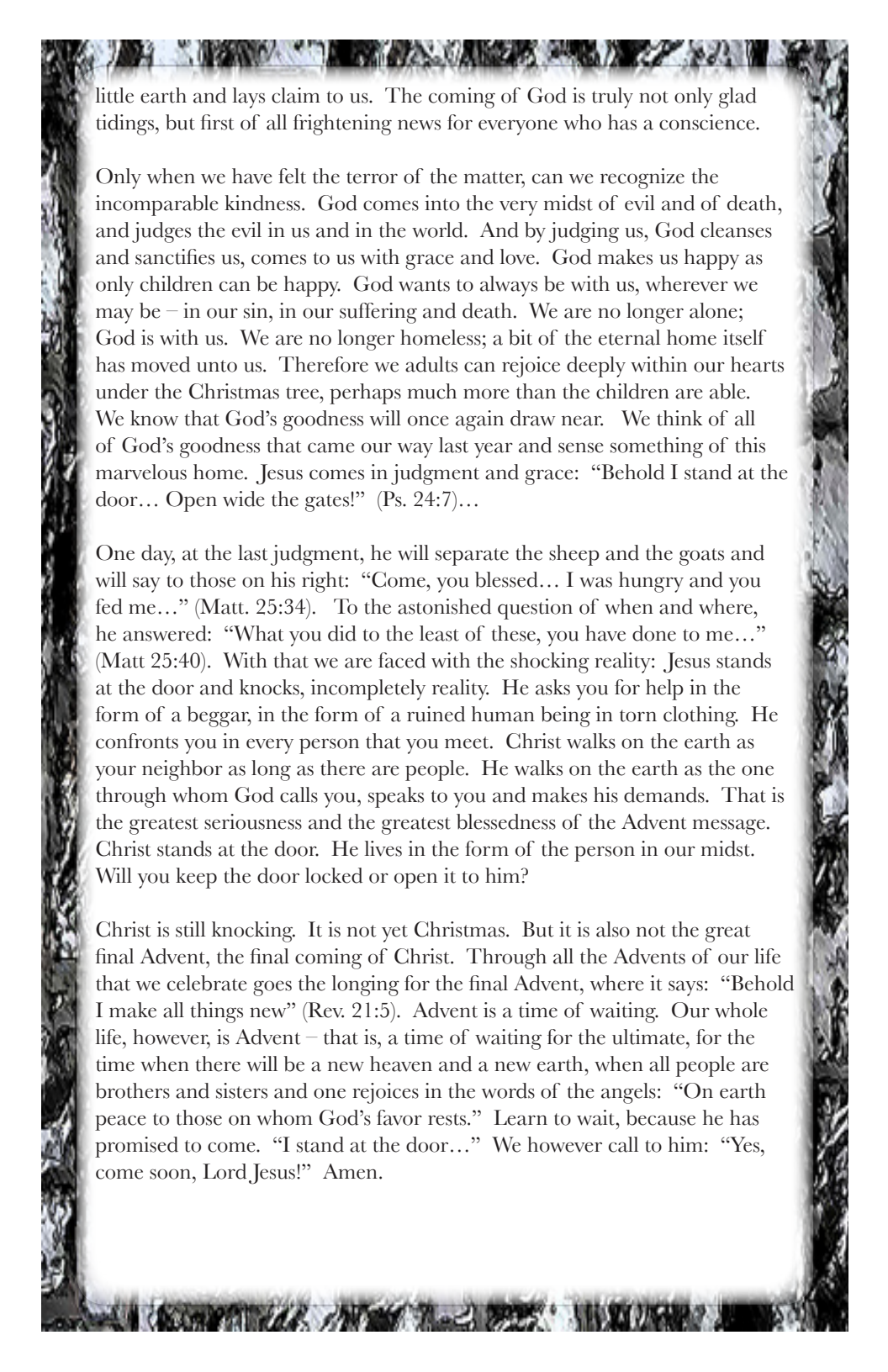
Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) was a German Lutheran pastor and theologian during the tumultuous period of the rise of Third Reich in Nazi Germany. Bonhoeffer was a leader in the "Confessing Church," a Christian opposition movement against Adolf Hitler's treatment of the Jews. Bonhoeffer published many works during his years of pastoring, study, and teaching. His most famous works include *The Cost of Discipleship*, *Ethics*, and *Life Together*. Bonhoeffer was part of a famous conspiracy that plotted to assassinate Hitler. However, he was arrested in 1943 for attempting to smuggle Jews to Switzerland, and his involvement in the failed "July 20 Plot" (of 1944) to assassinate Hitler was discovered. On April 9th, 1945, just three weeks prior to the fall of the Third Reich, Bonhoeffer was executed by hanging. It would be one of Hitler's last official orders before his own death three weeks later. Despite his tragic death, Bonhoeffer lives on as one of the great Christian martyr's of the 20th Century. His unbending faith, his direct and bold writing style, and a heart which matched his beliefs with his actions, all make Bonhoeffer a timeless Christian author with whom we can contemplate our own faith and practice in following Jesus Christ. I commend him to you heartily...

The Coming of Jesus in Our Midst

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

Revelation 3:20

WHEN EARLY CHRISTIANITY SPOKE of the return of the Lord Jesus, they thought of a great day of judgment. Even though this thought may appear to us to be so unlike Christmas, it is original Christianity and to be taken extremely seriously. When we hear Jesus knocking, our conscience first of all pricks us: Are we rightly prepared? Is our heart capable of becoming God's dwelling place? Thus Advent becomes a time of self-examination. "Put the desires of your heart in order, O human beings!" (Valentin Thilo), as the old song sings. It is very remarkable that we face the thought that God is coming so calmly, whereas previously peoples trembled at the day of God, whereas the world fell into trembling when Jesus Christ walked over the earth. That is why we find it so strange when we see the marks of God in the world so often together with the marks of human suffering, with the marks of the cross on Golgotha. We have become so accustomed to the idea of divine love and of God's coming at Christmas that we no longer feel the shiver of fear that God's coming should arouse in us. We are indifferent to the message, taking only the pleasant and agreeable out of it and forgetting the serious aspect, that the God of the world draws near to the people of our



little earth and lays claim to us. The coming of God is truly not only glad tidings, but first of all frightening news for everyone who has a conscience.

Only when we have felt the terror of the matter, can we recognize the incomparable kindness. God comes into the very midst of evil and of death, and judges the evil in us and in the world. And by judging us, God cleanses and sanctifies us, comes to us with grace and love. God makes us happy as only children can be happy. God wants to always be with us, wherever we may be – in our sin, in our suffering and death. We are no longer alone; God is with us. We are no longer homeless; a bit of the eternal home itself has moved unto us. Therefore we adults can rejoice deeply within our hearts under the Christmas tree, perhaps much more than the children are able. We know that God's goodness will once again draw near. We think of all of God's goodness that came our way last year and sense something of this marvelous home. Jesus comes in judgment and grace: "Behold I stand at the door... Open wide the gates!" (Ps. 24:7)...

One day, at the last judgment, he will separate the sheep and the goats and will say to those on his right: "Come, you blessed... I was hungry and you fed me..." (Matt. 25:34). To the astonished question of when and where, he answered: "What you did to the least of these, you have done to me..." (Matt 25:40). With that we are faced with the shocking reality: Jesus stands at the door and knocks, incompletely reality. He asks you for help in the form of a beggar, in the form of a ruined human being in torn clothing. He confronts you in every person that you meet. Christ walks on the earth as your neighbor as long as there are people. He walks on the earth as the one through whom God calls you, speaks to you and makes his demands. That is the greatest seriousness and the greatest blessedness of the Advent message. Christ stands at the door. He lives in the form of the person in our midst. Will you keep the door locked or open it to him?

Christ is still knocking. It is not yet Christmas. But it is also not the great final Advent, the final coming of Christ. Through all the Advents of our life that we celebrate goes the longing for the final Advent, where it says: "Behold I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). Advent is a time of waiting. Our whole life, however, is Advent – that is, a time of waiting for the ultimate, for the time when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, when all people are brothers and sisters and one rejoices in the words of the angels: "On earth peace to those on whom God's favor rests." Learn to wait, because he has promised to come. "I stand at the door..." We however call to him: "Yes, come soon, Lord Jesus!" Amen.

Advent Notes

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